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# Sicong Ma's Amei Suite & Gaoshan Suite : historical background and performer's guide

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SICONG MA'S  
*AMEI SUITE & GAOSHAN SUITE:*  
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PERFORMER'S GUIDE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
In partial fulfillment of the  
Requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by  
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## ABSTRACT

Before the Spanish, the Dutch, the Japanese, and the Chinese Mainlanders occupied Taiwan, Austronesians are believed to have been the island's first immigrants. They are acknowledged as the Aboriginal Taiwanese. Since these people do not have a written language, music, especially singing, became an important means of communication and education for the Aborigines, whose culture is today considered one of the most historically valuable cultures in Taiwan.

Sicong Ma (1912-1987) is a major composer who also played an important political role in China. After escaping from China during the Culture Revolution in 1967, Ma was protected by the United States government and settled in the United States until he died. He traveled to Taiwan several times as an invited guest of the government, where he gave recitals and conducted symphony orchestras on the island. During his trips to Taiwan, Ma had a chance to attend performances of aboriginal music; this document will explore the influence of this tribal music on his *Amei Suite* (1973) and *Gaoshan Suite* (1973), composed after his return to the US.

This document will comprise four chapters. The first chapter will explore Sicong Ma's biographical information and his compositional style, and will also emphasize the connection between Ma and Taiwan. The second chapter will be an introduction to the music of the Taiwanese Aborigines. It will review the musical style of the different tribes, and the use of their instruments, such as double nose flutes, jaw harps, and mouthbows. Chapter three will provide an historical perspective on both of the Ma works under consideration. In cases where it is not possible to consult the original score, the author will concentrate on the musical characters in Ma's version. The fourth chapter will comprise a performer's guide. The author will analyze the two suites and give suggestions for interpretation.



The goal of this document is to promote the culture of the author's home country. Moreover, the author hopes that this document will inspire more musicians to analyze and perform works that draw on the folkloric and indigenous idioms of their own countries.

## INTRODUCTION

Before the Spanish, the Dutch, the Japanese, and the Chinese Mainlanders<sup>1</sup> occupied Taiwan, Austronesians are believed to have been the island's first immigrants to this previously uninhabited place. They are acknowledged as the Aborigines of Taiwan. Since they do not have a written language, music, especially singing, became an important means of communication and education for the Aborigines, whose culture is today considered one of the most historically valuable cultures in Taiwan.

Surprisingly, the world actually heard the music of Taiwanese Aborigines in the early 1990's. The British band Enigma borrow segments of the Taiwanese Aboriginal song, *Elders Drinking Song* (老人飲酒歌) sung by an Amis singer, Kuo Ying-Nan (a.k.a. Difang), and his wife, Kuo Hsiu-Chu (a.k.a. Ignay). The single reached the apex of its success in 1996 when the International Olympic Committee selected it in the promotional video for the Atlanta Games. Sadly, the band did not give any credit to Mr. and Mrs. Kuo, which eventually resulted in a lawsuit.<sup>2</sup>

As a native of Taiwan and a lover of Taiwanese cultures, the study, appreciation, and promulgation of the island's cultural treasures have become my mission. As a classically-trained violinist, I also felt compelled to seek the connection between art music and the music of Taiwanese Aborigines. In this regard, two fine pieces by Chinese composer Sicong Ma have attracted me.

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese that came from the Mainland with Chiang Kai-Shek, the leader of the democratic KMT party that was defeated by the Chinese communist party in 1945.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Guy, "Trafficking in Taiwan, Aboriginal Voices Revisited" in *Reading Chinese Music and Beyond*, ed. Joys H. Y. Cheung and King Chung Wong (Hong Kong: Chinese Civilization Center, City of University of Hong Kong, 2010), 151-158.

Sicong Ma (1912-1987) was a major composer and became an important political figure in China. Under threat of torture by the Red Guards during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Ma fled to the United States with his family in 1967. Seen as a hero by the democratic government of Taiwan, he visited the island several times and wrote *Amei Suite*<sup>3</sup> and *Gaoshan Suite* after listening to the music of the Taiwanese Aborigines.

This document will comprise four chapters. The first chapter will explore Sicong Ma's biographical information and his compositional style, and will also emphasize the connection between Ma and Taiwan. The second chapter will be an introduction to the music of the Taiwanese Aborigines. It will detail the musical styles of the different tribes, and the use of their instruments, such as double nose flutes, jaw harps, and mouthbows. Chapter three will provide an historical perspective on both of Ma's works under consideration. The fourth chapter presents a performer's guide which contains analysis of the two suites and suggestions for interpretation.

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<sup>3</sup> "Amei" was the Chinese translation used in early days and was later replaced by "Amis" when the Government Information Office officially listed the Amis tribe as one of the Taiwanese Aboriginal groups.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE COMPOSER – SICONG MA

### Biography

The Chinese composer Sicong Ma was born in Haifeng, Guandong on May 7, 1912 into a family of scholars. At the age of eleven, he went to France with two of his older brothers and three years later he was admitted to the affiliate of the *Conservatoire de Paris* at Nancy in 1926. He did not enjoy studying at the school, however, and decided to move back to Paris. There, he took private lessons with violinist Paul Oberdoerffer, who helped him correct most of his technical problems on the violin and greatly influenced his taste in music. Two years later Ma went back to China. He was famous as the first Chinese violinist to study abroad and was dubbed a “child prodigy.” He was invited to perform all over the country, even making his first trip to Taiwan.<sup>4</sup>

When he returned to Paris in 1929, he was officially admitted to the *Conservatoire de Paris*. Seeing Ma’s talent for composition, Oberdoerffer recommended him to a Turkish Jewish composer, Janko Binenbaum, saying “... You need a teacher whose musical style is free and daring... His name is Binenbaum. He is a weird and moody guy, and his works are rarely performed. I spent four months rehearsing his string quartet – it is very difficult to play.”<sup>5</sup> Binenbaum taught Ma not only about music, but also about the art, the literature, and the philosophy of life. “Without him,” Ma said, “my compositions might have been tasteless,

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<sup>4</sup> Yonglie Ye, 馬思聰傳 [Sicong Ma] (Hong Kong: South China Press, 1988), 76.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 79-80.

immature, and incomplete. Without him, I might have had to spend my whole life searching for the right path. Mr. Binenbaum is my composition professor and my mentor.”<sup>6</sup>

Two years later, Ma returned to China, starting his life as a traveling musician. He founded the Guangzhou Conservatory of Music and held a string of teaching positions at the National School of Music (the predecessor of Shanghai Conservatory of Music), National Central University in Nanjing, and Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou. In 1946, the Taipei Symphony Orchestra invited Ma to be their conductor. Ma held the position for six months, during which time his son Rulong Ma was born.<sup>7</sup>

In 1947, the second Chinese Civil War broke out. The Communist Party claimed victory and founded the People’s Republic of China in 1949, forcing the defeated democratic KMT to retreat to Taiwan. A patriotic musician and a supporter of the Communist Party, Ma was appointed the first president of the Central Conservatory of Music after the war. In 1966, however, the tragic Cultural Revolution broke out and Ma was unjustly targeted by radical students. Later, Ma and his colleagues were sent to the concentration camp to be ‘re-educated’:

It was August 9. As we entered the big gate we saw a great crowd of people – students, workers, soldiers, even children. We were prodded off and no sooner had I set foot on the ground than someone dumped a bucket of paste over my head. Others stuck *tatzepao* (poster) on my body and rammed a tall dunce cap labeled “Cow Demon” on my head. A cardboard plaque around my neck said, “Ma Sitson, agent of the bourgeois opposition.” Later another sign calling me “Vampire” was added.<sup>8</sup>

The red guards tortured and humiliated Ma and other scholars; among the red guards were also Ma’s students from the conservatory. Thanks to a carefully planned breakout, the Ma family made the arduous journey to British-held Hong Kong, where they were protected until they fled

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<sup>6</sup> Ye, 84.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>8</sup> Sicong Ma, “Terror of the Hands of the Red Guard,” *Life*, June 2, 1967, 28.

to the United States in 1967. The Chinese Communist Party accused Ma of being a traitor after he escaped to the U.S. Because of this, many of his relatives and colleagues were investigated. Some were executed by shooting, while others committed suicide to avoid the investigation, such as his brother Siwu Ma.<sup>9</sup>

Ma's flight from Communist China was a huge victory for the KMT party. To gain Ma's support, the KMT government invited him to Taiwan as a solo recitalist and an orchestral conductor, promoting Ma as "a morally courageous person who fought against the Chinese Communist Party."<sup>10</sup> He visited Taiwan five times between 1968 and 1985.<sup>11</sup> It was during these visits that Ma had a chance to attend performances of Taiwanese Aboriginal music. He acquired new musical material, which became the inspiration for future compositions.

The governments of the United States and Taiwan financially supported Ma's family in his last twenty years. He declined teaching positions from several universities, choosing instead to concentrate on composing. In 1985, a year before his death, the Chinese Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Culture announced that their government had decided to rehabilitate Sicong Ma's case. Zuqiang Wu, the principal of the Central Conservatory of Music at the time, who worked hard to defend Ma's innocence, said that "Mr. Sicong Ma's rehabilitation emphasizes people's denial towards the Cultural Revolution..." Even with the Chinese

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<sup>9</sup> Yuan Lin, "假如我是馬思聰的遺屬 [If I were Sicong Ma's family]," Comment Aboluowang.com, [http://tw.aboluowang.com/comment/data/2010/0818/article\\_17221.html](http://tw.aboluowang.com/comment/data/2010/0818/article_17221.html) (accessed: August 10, 2012)

<sup>10</sup> Digital Taiwan – Culture & Nature, "(1977-01-23~1977-12-29) 義士義胞在祖國," <http://catalog.digitalarchives.tw/item/00/3a/1a/f2.html> (accessed: August 25, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Ye, 356-358.

government's change in policy, Ma never returned to his home country again. He died at the age of seventy-five, from a failed heart operation in 1987.<sup>12</sup>

### Compositional Style

Janko Binenbaum, Ma's composition teacher from his time in Paris, greatly influenced his approach to composition. He strove to imitate his mentor, encouraging himself to be a real artist devoted to the music.<sup>13</sup> Ma's early works show a strong Western influence in form and style, such as "Lullaby" (1935) and "Rondo" (1937). The turning point came in the spring of 1936 when Ma and his wife toured Beijing and attended a performance of *jinyun dagu* (京韻大鼓), traditional Chinese music (see figure 1.1).<sup>14</sup> The performance startled the Europeanized young composer, who typically belittled the folk arts of his country and thought of them as old-fashioned and worthless.

Awakened to the beauty and worth of his native traditional music, Sicong Ma realized that his mission was to introduce Chinese folk music to a wide audience through his compositions. He toured every province in China except Tibet, collecting local tunes for use in his compositions.

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<sup>12</sup> Ye, 366.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>14</sup> *Jingyun dagu* (京韻大鼓) was practically created by *Liu Binchuan* (1869-1942) and *Bai Yun-Peng* (1874-1952). It is a vocal style that combines aspects from other existing vocal arts such as *Beijing opera*, plum drum narrative music, *kuaishu* storytelling, and folksongs. In addition to the basic *sanxian* (three-stringed lute) and *biangu* (flat drum) accompaniment, it features the *sihu* (four-stringed fiddle), and *pipa* (four-stringed lute).



Figure 1.1. Performance of *jingyun dagu*<sup>15</sup>

The watershed of Ma's new compositional style is *Suiyuan Suite* for violin and orchestra (1937). Its second movement, "The Song of Nostalgia," adopts a folk song from Inner Mongolia called *Cheng Qiang Shang Pao Ma* (城牆上跑馬).<sup>16</sup> The violin solo part is imitating the technique of the Chinese fiddle *Hu*, while the harmonic progression and the musical texture are written in the style of Western music. Because of its melancholy melody and Ma's successful combination of Eastern and Western elements, "The Song of Nostalgia" quickly became a classic during the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945).

Ma's subsequent musical compositions prove his commitment to "writing new music with old Chinese elements." Believing that the first phrase or opening melodic idea of a folk

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<sup>15</sup> Zhenpei Bao, "Master of Jingyuandagu Yusheng Luo, at Chingyun Theater, 1946," *Guanming News*, [http://www.gmw.cn/01ds/2005-05/18/content\\_235509.htm](http://www.gmw.cn/01ds/2005-05/18/content_235509.htm) (accessed August 26, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> "The Song of Nostalgia 思鄉曲," *Hudong Encyclopedia Online*. [http://www.hudong.com/wiki/%E6%80%9D%E4%B9%A1%E6%9B%B2?prd=so\\_1\\_doc](http://www.hudong.com/wiki/%E6%80%9D%E4%B9%A1%E6%9B%B2?prd=so_1_doc) (accessed August 10, 2012).



song is the soul of a composition, he placed primary importance on how to treat that opening material. He felt that one must find the spirit and the color of the opening phrase, and then combine it with one's own musical style; music composed without this process results in music absent of the guiding spirit of Chinese musical tradition.<sup>17</sup> Ma's composition, *Tone Poem of Tibet*, evokes images of the life and culture of the Tibetan highland, such as the religious life and rites of the Tibetan lamasery, and the traditional dance of the sword. In addition to the use of Tibetan folk songs, Ma also employs elements to create his vision of Indian music, such as diminished sevenths, dissonant chords, a wood fish (woodblock), a hanging bell, and a gong to create a mysterious atmosphere.<sup>18</sup> Other works, such as *Dragon Lantern Dance*, *Dance at the Lantern Festival*, and *Madrigal* also reveal Ma's passion for Chinese folk music. *Dragon Lantern Dance* adopts *Liu Zhidan Climbs Mountain Henshan* (劉志丹上恆山), a folksong of northern Shaanxi province. *Dance at the Lantern Festival* uses a popular tune from East China and North China: *Li Yulian Tune* (李玉蓮調). The theme of *Madrigal* is developed by an Inner Mongolian folksong *Shua Nu Xu* (耍女婿).

Ma also made use of Chinese folklore. The ballet *Sunset Clouds* (1978), for example, is based on a story from the *Strange Tales of Liaozhai* (聊齋), a collection of nearly five hundred supernatural short stories dating from the late seventeenth century. Chinese poetry is also a source of Ma's inspiration, such as *Six Poems by Li Bai* (1969) and *Eight Tang Poems* (1969), as well as the opera *Rebia* (1980), which was based on a Uyghur poet's work.

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<sup>17</sup> Xia Su, "Postscript," 馬思聰小提琴曲集 [A Collection of Violin Works by Sicong Ma], ed. Sicong Ma Study Association (Beijing, China: People's Music Publishing House).

<sup>18</sup> Ye, 122.

Ma's works are governed by strict compositional techniques and a strong Chinese cultural identity. He wrote music for solo voice, chorus, operas, dance dramas, instrumental solos, ensemble pieces, orchestral music and symphonies.<sup>19</sup> He also wrote patriotic songs during the second Sino-Japanese War. He somehow never composed solo music for woodwinds or brass instruments.

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<sup>19</sup> Ching-Chih Liu, *A Critical History of New Music in China*, trans., Caroline Mason (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2010), 246.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE MUSIC OF THE TAIWANESE ABORIGINES

Ethnologists have different ideas about when the first people arrived in Taiwan, but Austronesian people were definitely the first to land on the island.<sup>20</sup> Their modern descendants are called the Taiwanese Aborigines. Generally, their personality is innocent, honest, and friendly. The Aborigines are divided into two groups: the *Pingpu* (plains tribes) and the *Gaoshan* (high mountain tribes). Located on the plains, traces of foreign influences have been observed in the *Pingpu*'s culture. The *Gaoshan*, on the other hand, maintained their lifestyle and unique culture because they resided in the high mountains where they were inaccessible to outside influence.<sup>21</sup> In this chapter, I will only focus on the study of the remote tribes of the *Gaoshan* group.

The *Gaoshan* group initially included nine tribes: Atayal, Saisiat, Bunun, Paiwan, Rukai, Puyuma, Tsou, Amis, and Yami.<sup>22</sup> Later, the Taroko (Turuku), Seediq, Kamalan, Thao, and Sakizaya tribes were officially recognized by the Taiwanese government.<sup>23</sup> Because none of these tribes developed a writing system, music became the main method for communication,

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<sup>20</sup> The Austronesian people originated in Mainland China, and started the seafaring about 6000 years ago. They colonized Taiwan, Philippines, islands of Celebes Seas, Borneo, and Indonesia in order. Austronesian languages are divided into four subfamilies and three of them are used by the Taiwanese Aborigines, who are the descendants of the Austronesian expansion.

<sup>21</sup> Schu-Chi Li, review of *Taiwan: Music of the Aboriginal Tribes* by Wolfgang Laade, *Year Book for Traditional Music*, vol. 25 (Slovenia: International Council of Traditional Music), 181.

<sup>22</sup> *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Taiwan," <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49502> (accessed August 31, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Taiwan's Indigenous People's Portal: The Tribes, Council of Indigenous People Executive Yuan, <http://www.tipp.org.tw/formosan/subitem/subitem.aspx?id=701> (accessed September 7, 2012).

education, and entertainment.<sup>24</sup> For these purposes, singing was quite common throughout all of the tribes. Expert of the Amis music, Chun-Yen Sun, has mentioned the tight connection between the songs and the Taiwanese Aborigines' life, "In the Amis's language, there is no word related to 'music'...only 'singing' or the 'song' is meaningful, and expresses the Amis people's attitude towards life."<sup>25</sup> Thus the profession of "musician" does not exist among the tribes, since all members sing on all occasions. Instrumental music, on the other hand, was less common due to its requirement of specialized techniques.

## **Vocal Music**

### **A. Song Categories**

Takatomo Kurosawa was the most important scholar who studied the music of the Taiwanese Aborigines when Taiwan was under Japanese rule. He divided the aboriginal songs into seven categories according to their functions: the festival song, the magic song, the working song, the love song, the drinking song, the village festival song, and the ballad.<sup>26</sup> The Taiwanese musicologist and priest, I-To Loh, offers even more detailed categories in his study of the Amis and the Puyuma music, expanding Kurosawa's seven categories into ten (see table 2.1).

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<sup>24</sup> Jacob, 198.

<sup>25</sup> Chun-Yen Sun, "阿美族馬蘭地區複音歌謠研究 [The Study of the Amis' Polyphony Songs from the Malan Area]" (master's diss., Soochow University, 2001), 31-32.

<sup>26</sup> Takatomo Kurosawa, 台湾高砂族の音楽 [The Music of Taiwanese Aborigines] (Tokyo: Yuzankaku, 1973), 8-9.

Table 2.1. Loh's categories of the Taiwanese Aborigines' vocal music<sup>27</sup>

Category	Song title or description
Epic and Myth	Epic stories or tribal heroes, wars, legends; myths in association with festivals, such as Harvest Festivals or New Year feasts.
Religious Rituals	Ancestor rituals Shamanistic rituals Christian service and hymns <sup>28</sup>
Ceremonial	Bunun tribe's <i>Pasibutbut</i> : A song of prayer for the millet sowing. Harvest Ceremony
Rites of Passage	Birth Initiation ceremony for youth Marriage Death
Nature, Scenery and Village	Praise of the beauty of creation – flowers, trees, animals, the oceans, the scenes, and the villages
Military and Hunting	The intention of military actions is obtaining human heads to raise the hero's social status.
Occupational	Farming Fishing Weaving Lullaby
Children and Games	Most of the songs are forgotten; children learned songs in Japanese and Chinese from school, and the songs became their 'own' songs.
Social and Recreational	Drinking Songs Dance Songs Recreational Songs Love Songs
Of Uncertain Placing	Songs of admonition – the advice of showing filial piety to parents Songs of dispute (Yami)

<sup>27</sup> I-To Loh, "Tribal Music of Taiwan: with Special Reference to the Ami and Puyuma Styles" (PhD's diss., University of California, 1982), 108-140.

<sup>28</sup> Christianity was firstly introduced to a *Pingpu* tribe near Tainan when the Dutch dominated Taiwan during 1624-1661. See Chiu-Hui Tsai, "台灣原住民宣教事工," <http://eden1.so-buy.com/front/bin/ptdetail.phtml?Part=hm-9709-08&Category=29478> (accessed September 1, 2012)

## B. Musical Textures

Western musical forms have been applied to the aboriginal music as well. Taiwanese musicologist Tsang-Houei Hsu organizes the music into four types – monophony, heterophony, multipart texture, and harmony (see table 2.2),<sup>29</sup> while another Taiwanese musicologist Bingchuan Lu offers a different organization by dividing it into nine categories (see table 2.3).<sup>30</sup>

Table 2.2. Hsu's Organization of Musical Textures in Taiwanese Aboriginal music.

Monophony	Recitation (Bunun and Yami) Melody (Amis, Atayal, and Tsou) Duet (Atayal and Yami) Leader-chorus (all tribes)
Heterophony	Yami, Paiwan, and Rukai
Multipart texture	Parallel fifth or fourth (Bunun and Saisiat) Ostinato (Paiwan, Rukai, and Amis) Canonic imitation (Atayal) Free canon (Amis)
Harmony / Consonance	Consonant chords or harmonies (Bunun and Tsou)

Table 2.3. Lu's Organization of the Musical Textures in Taiwanese Aboriginal music.

Counterpoint	Two to five parts of free counterpoint: Amis from Puyuma area
Harmony (Consonance)	Harmony: Bunun Consonance: Tsou
Heterophony	Paiwan, Rukai, Puyuma, Yami
Organum	Parallel fourths or fifths: Saisiat
Canon	Seediq
Chorus-Leader	The chorus sings, followed by the song leader: all tribes
Drone Bass / Ostinato	Rukai and Paiwan
Variations	Over twenty variations: Paiwan and Rukai
Chromaticism	Bunun <i>Pasibutbut</i>

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<sup>29</sup> Tsang-Houei Hsu, 台灣音樂史初稿 [The Music History of Taiwan: First Draft] (Taipei, Taiwan: Chuan-Yin Music Press, 1991), 27.

<sup>30</sup> Bingchuan Lu, 台灣土著族音樂 [The Music of the Taiwanese Aborigines] (Taipei, Taiwan: Bai ke wen hua shi ye co., 1982), 13-14.

Aside from the common practice of the solo singing, most of the songs require the participation of two or more singers. Taking the Bunun's *Pasibutbut* as an example, six, eight, or twelve males hold hands or place their hands on each other's shoulders, lower their heads, and walk clockwise in a ring while singing a major or minor chord, and transpose it chromatically. The physical closeness of the singing practice illustrates the importance of solidarity among the tribesmen (see figure 2-1).<sup>31</sup>



Figure 2.1. The Bunun males sing *Pasibutbut*<sup>32</sup>

Based on their location and lifestyle, each tribe has its own way of singing, either with or without dance. The Amis Dance of the Harvest Festival is a typical example that relates the song to the dance (see figure 2.2).

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<sup>31</sup> Yuxiu Lu, 台灣音樂史 [The Music History of Taiwan] (Taipei, Taiwan: Wunan Press, 2010), 225.

<sup>32</sup> The Bunun people sing *Pasibutbut*, <http://web.gwes.tnc.edu.tw/www/993a/modules/tadgallery/view.php?sn=6> (accessed August 26, 2012)



Figure 2.2. The Amis Dance of Harvest Festival<sup>33</sup>

### **Instrumental Music**

Unlike the large group participation in vocal music, instrumental music is usually played by a soloist or a small ensemble. Because the Taiwanese Aborigines' general concept of music is focused on singing, instrumental music is not highly regarded. Scholars, however, have studied aboriginal instruments and instrumental music since Japan's domination of Taiwan (1895-1945). Ethnomusicologists Tanabe Takao, Takatomo Kurosawa, Bunichi Sato, ethnologists Joseph Lenherr and Hui Li studied different aspects of the aboriginal instruments and left a great number of field recordings.<sup>34</sup> Sadly, the aboriginal instrumental tradition is gradually being lost.

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<sup>33</sup> The Amis women sing and dance to the Harvest Festival, <http://photo.xuite.net/cpchang.cpchang/3476189/31.jpg> (accessed August 30, 2012)

<sup>34</sup> Lu, 14.



The younger generations are no longer interested in learning the traditional music, and at the same time, the elders who can play the instruments are passing away.<sup>35</sup>

Kurosawa and Lenherr adopt H. Fischer's system to categorize the aboriginal instruments.<sup>36</sup>

Table 2.4. Category of the Taiwanese Aboriginal instruments.

Idiophones	Gong, musical pestle, stumping tube, small bell, hanging bell, and mouth harp.
Membranophone	Mortar. Drums, however, were not found in all tribes.
Chordophones	Mouth bow (musical bow) and pentachord, which was rarely played and found only in a Bunun village, Tamarowan, by Kurosawa.
Aerophones	Vertical flute, nose flute, cross flute.

In his study, Huilin Wei found that the mouthbow (musical bow), the nose flute, and the jaw harp were the most commonly used instruments in the tribes. Because these three instruments are significant to the tribes' musical culture, I will give a brief description of them.<sup>37</sup>

#### A. Jaw harp

While the jaw harp is not as common as it once was, it remains important as a use for communicating, courting, and may also be used as an heirloom or part of a dowry. Among all tribes, the Atayal own the best collection of jaw harps.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Midori D. Himeno, "The Aboriginal Music of Taiwan" in *The Performing Arts: Music and Dance*, ed., John Blacking and J. W. Kealiinohomoku (The Hague: Mouton Publisher, 1979), 157.

<sup>36</sup> Kurosawa, 282-284.

<sup>37</sup> Huilin Wei, "台灣土著族的源流與分類 [The Source and the Classification of the Taiwan Aborigines]," *The Collection of Theses, Taiwan* (Taipei, Taiwan: Chunghua Culture, 1958), 32-33.



Figure 2.3. Left, three-lamella jaw harp (Atayal tribe),<sup>39</sup> right, Atayal musician Bao-Hsiung Cheng plays the Jaw harp.<sup>40</sup>

The jaw harp consists of the frame, the lamella(s), and the plucking device. The frame is made of bamboo, bones, or metal (most are brass). A strip cut out from the frame forms the lamella, with one end of the lamella still touching the frame. A string is tied on each side of the frame; one is for the player to hold, and the other serves as the plucking device/activator. The playing technique is to jerk the string/plucking device to produce the sympathetic vibration in the frame, which then causes the lamella(s) to vibrate towards the player's mouth cavity.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Yawi Nomin Bokusi, "The Expert of the Aboriginal Jaw harp – Pastor Mingchin Chiang" Overseas Chinese Council, R.O.C. (Taiwan), <http://www.mactv.com.tw/mactv/video.htm?fid=454&classid=19&language=ch> (accessed September 9, 2012).

<sup>39</sup> "Three-lamella Jaw Harp (Atayal tribe)" *Digital Museum of Taiwan Indigenous People*, <http://www.dmtip.gov.tw/Aborigines/Photo.aspx?CategoryID=5&ClassID=16&TypeID=29&RaceID=2&PhotoID=645> (accessed September 9, 2012).

<sup>40</sup> Chia-Hui Yeh and Chia-Huan Yu, "Atayal musician Bao-hsiung Cheng plays the Jaw harp," UDN Online, [http://mag.udn.com/mag/newsstand/storypage.jsp?f\\_ART\\_ID=393244](http://mag.udn.com/mag/newsstand/storypage.jsp?f_ART_ID=393244) (accessed September 9, 2012).

The single-lamella jaw harp was popular in the Bunun tribe. Aside from its fundamental pitch, it can also produce harmonics of *do*, *re*, *mi*, and *sol*. The jaw harp that has more than one lamella was commonly used in the Atayal tribe. The two-lamella jaw harp usually forms the interval of major second or minor third, whereas one with three lamellas forms a minor third above or the major second below.<sup>42</sup>

#### B. Mouthbow (musical bow)



Figure 2.4. Left, the Bunun mouthbow,<sup>43</sup> right, a mouthbow player accompanied by a Jaw harp player.<sup>44</sup>

The mouthbow and the five-stringed lute were the only multi-string instruments found in the tribes. The mouthbow was the more popular of the two. According to the tribal elders, the

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<sup>41</sup> Joseph Lenherr, "The Musical Instruments of the Taiwan Aborigines," 民族研究所集刊 [The Journal of the Ethnological Study], vol. 23 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1967), 116.

<sup>42</sup> Loh, 147-148.

<sup>43</sup> Tsu-Lan Liu, "The Bunun Mouthbow," *Taiwan Academy*, <http://taiwanacademy.tw/en/archives/item/2200643.html> (accessed September 10, 2012).

<sup>44</sup> "The Ensemble of the Aboriginal Jaw Harp and the Mouthbow," *Taiwan Memory*, [http://memory.ncl.edu.tw/tm\\_2007/hypage.cgi?HYPAGE=all\\_detail.htm&subject\\_type=image&did\\_id=10&project\\_id=twpt&xml\\_id=0000360725](http://memory.ncl.edu.tw/tm_2007/hypage.cgi?HYPAGE=all_detail.htm&subject_type=image&did_id=10&project_id=twpt&xml_id=0000360725) (accessed September 10, 2012).

five-string lute was once played in the Bunun tribe but it no longer exists.<sup>45</sup> Lenherr mentioned that the Amis, the Bunun, the Paiwan, and the Tsou still played the mouthbow (1967), nevertheless fifteen years later Lu noted that only a few aged Bunun could still play it (1982). This evidence indicates that the technique of playing this traditional instrument is gradually being lost. Tribesmen played the mouthbow to express their emotions, “The sky is getting dark, and it is silent in the mountain. I play the mouthbow when I feel lonely,” said a Bunun elder, Biun.<sup>46</sup>

The aboriginal mouthbow is a simple type without a resonator. The string is made of hemp-fiber, rattan or metal. The bow is made of bamboo. The ancient type was of a simple construction and only has an open string. The advanced mouthbow, on the other hand, has a more complex construction and has a bridge made in one of several different ways: 1) a short slit bamboo tube is set to the upper end of the bow; 2) the upper end is forked, and a pebble is placed in the furcation; 3) a loop is attached to the higher end of the bow; 4) the string has a lacing on the lower end of the bow to secure the tension of the string.<sup>47</sup>

The player holds the upper end of the bow with the mouth cavity to control the volume and produce the harmonics. The lower end of the bow is held by the left hand, with the bow placed in the space of the thumb-index finger web. Sometimes the thumb presses the string to produce a different pitch. The right hand plucks the string with the thumb and index finger. The mouthbow is mainly a solo instrument, but occasionally it accompanies a choir, as seen in the

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<sup>45</sup> Lu, 21.

<sup>46</sup> “Words of the Elders” *Taiwan Indigenous TV*, <http://youtu.be/5BTJigsUUOs> (accessed August 17, 2012).

<sup>47</sup> Lenherr, 118.

Bunun tribe. For this purpose, the size of the mouthbow is bigger for the requirement of a larger sound.

### C. Nose flute



Figure 2.5. Left, the Paiwan nose flute,<sup>48</sup> right, the nose flute player Kun-Chung Hsu.<sup>49</sup>

The nose flute is chiefly representative of the Paiwan, the Amis, and the Rukai tribes. Traditionally, only males were allowed to play the nose flute. In the special case of the double-nose flute, only the chieftain's family had the right to own it and to play it, and it was played solely when the chieftain courted or when he died. Today this tradition is no longer observed, so

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<sup>48</sup> Tzu-Mei Tsai, “鼻笛[The Nose flute],” *Encyclopedia of Taiwan*, <http://taiwanpedia.culture.tw/web/content?ID=10625> (accessed September 11, 2012).

<sup>49</sup> “Nose flute player Kun-Chung Hsu,” *Bureau of Cultural Heritage*, <http://www.boch.gov.tw/boch/frontsite/cms/newsHistoryDetailViewAction.do?method=doViewHistoryNewsDetail&contentId=4783&isAddHitRate=true&relationPk=4783&tableName=content&iscancel=true&menuId=3402> (accessed September 11, 2012).

anyone who wishes can play the nose flute. But, the chieftain still retains the right to carve the totem of the sharp-nosed viper, the Paiwan's spiritual figure, on the instrument.<sup>50</sup>

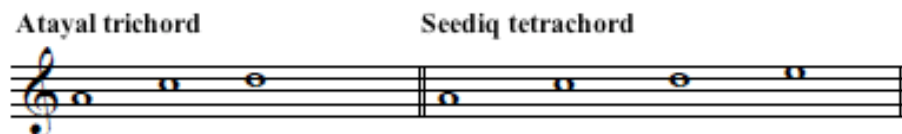
The nose flute is made of bamboo. Its average length is one foot and seven inches. In the case of the double-nose flute, the pipe for the left hand usually has no fingering hole, functioning as a drone. The other pipe has four fingering holes.

The playing technique of the double-nose flute is difficult. The player blows air through the nose; therefore it is easily out of tune if the player's breath is unstable or short.

### The Scales

The most varied musical characteristic among the tribes is the scale. Ethnomusicologists have organized each tribe's scale(s) according to various taxonomic schemes. In this section I will explain Lu's system.<sup>51</sup>

#### 1. Atayal and Seediq



Example 2.1. The Atayal trichord and the Seediq tetrachord.

The Atayal trichord consists of a minor third topped with a major second. Its tetrachordal variant, the Seediq, has an additional major second placed above the chord (see Example 2.1).

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<sup>50</sup> Yu-Lan Chen, “鼻笛 (Nose Flute),” *Taiwan Indigene Dictionary*, <http://citing.hohayan.net.tw/default.asp> (accessed September 11, 2012).

<sup>51</sup> Lu, 23-44.

Other combinations of these chords do not occur. In addition, the Atayal is the only tribe that does not use sharp or flat notes.<sup>52</sup>

## 2. Saisiat



Example 2.2. Three different types of the Saisiat scales.

The Saisiat scale is basically the same as the Seediq tetrachord. Sometimes a minor third is added overhead. It forms an anhemitonic pentatonic scale, which is a pentatonic scale that does not contain semitones. Lu believes that the Atayal influenced the Saisiat's music. The Saisiats also use another pentatonic scale that is constructed by stacking the intervallic pattern of perfect fourth plus major second on top of itself. Sometimes the second note of the scale is omitted in the sacrifice to *paSta'ay*.<sup>53</sup>

## 3. Bunun



Example 2.3. Four types of the Bunun chords.

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<sup>52</sup> Lu, 23-27.

<sup>53</sup> *PaSta'ay* is the Saisiat's most important sacrifice of the year. It is said that the ta'ay (short men) are the Saisiat's neighbors. Short men helped the Saisiat harvest and taught them singing, dancing for the harvest ceremony. One day a short man molested a Saisiat woman, so the angry Saisiat men murdered most of the short men. The only two surviving short men, Ta'ay and Toway, asked the Saisiat to hold the *PaSta'ay* sacrifice every year, otherwise the Saisiat's crop will be damaged by the drought or the flood.

The Bunun scale is made up of the fanfare melody of natural harmonics: *do*, *mi*, *sol*, and *do*. The minor-chord variant of this pattern is used often as well. Sometimes a supertonic is added to a major triad or to a minor triad (see example 2.3).<sup>54</sup>

#### 4. Tsou



Example 2.4. The Tsou's three types of scales.

The Tsou have two types of scales: 1) one constructed from a major chord; 2) the anhemitonic pentatonic scale. The pentatonic scale usually begins and ends on *la*. It is possible that the Bunun influenced the Tsou musically, but the Tsou's scale is quite different from the Bunun's. A supertonic or a submediant is added to the major triad on occasion (see example 2.4).<sup>55</sup>

#### 5. Rukai



Example 2.5. Two types of the Rukai's scales.

The Rukai's music typically consists of a melody accompanied by a drone bass. A major scale is used within an octave, usually with the submediant and the leading tone omitted. Besides the drone bass style, the anhemitonic pentatonic scale and the minor scale without the

<sup>54</sup> Lu, 30-33.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 33-34.



submediant and the leading tone are popular as well (see example 2.5). The Rukai rarely use the technique of transposition.<sup>56</sup>

## 6. Paiwan

The Paiwan and the Rukai use the similar technique of the drone bass with the anhemitonic pentatonic scale. The Paiwan also use the Okinawan scale.<sup>57</sup> According to Lu, the Okinawan scale is *do-mi-fa*, a major third topped with a minor second.<sup>58</sup> However, the information offered by Okinawa International University indicates the commonly used Okinawan scale is *do-mi-fa-sol-si*, which I believe is the combination of two sets of [major third + minor second] (*do-mi-fa* + *sol-si-do*).

## 7. Puyuma

The Puyuma share a common scale with the Amis. The anhemitonic pentatonic scale is widely used. The melody mostly ends on *la*, but music that ends on *sol* or *do* is common, too. The modulation is used at times.<sup>59</sup>

## 8. Amis

Most of the Amis songs use the anhemitonic pentatonic scale. It is unclear where the scale came from, but it is generally believed that the Han Chinese did not influence the Amis's music, since its music has existed long before the Han Chinese landed on Taiwan. The register of

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<sup>56</sup> Lu, 34-36.

<sup>57</sup> Okinawa island is located in the far south of Japan, and is very close to Taiwan. Therefore Okinawan people even sailed to Taiwan and attacked Paiwan people in 1871. Its music system is called Okinaman music or Ryukyu music.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 37.

Amis music is over an octave, and the Amis people like to sing in higher registers. Transposition is a common technique.<sup>60</sup>

## 9. Yami

The Yami reside on a remote, tiny island called Lanyu that belongs to Taitung County, in the southeastern part of Taiwan. Because the Yami people did not have much connection with other tribes, their music shows little cross-tribal influence. The structure of the Yami scale is simple. Most of the music only uses *mi*, *re*, and *do*. The Yami people often shout when they start to sing. The shout occurring at the beginning of the music makes the scale sound like *sol-fa-mi-re-do*. It is difficult for ethnomusicologists to write the music out precisely because of the shouts. Transposition is commonly used in the Yami music. The middle section of the song is usually transposed a semitone or a whole tone higher, and then returns to the original pitch level at the end.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Lu, 37-38.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 38-40.

### CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF *AMEI SUITE* AND *GAOSHAN SUITE*

In 1968, the second year after Sicong Ma settled in the United States, he was invited to visit Taiwan as an “anti-Communist hero.” In addition to a recording session and attending concerts, Ma toured central Taiwan and met some native Aborigines. He referred to the event in his diary:

April 19, Friday (Sun-Moon Lake)

We toured Sun Moon Lake today by car and a pleasure boat. We also enjoyed the Gaoshan (aboriginal) people’s singing and dancing. I put on their traditional clothes and they took a picture for me.

The Gaoshan people are multiracial, of Dutch, Japanese, and Filipino descent. Their eyes and noses are pretty.<sup>62</sup>

Ma did not specify the names of the tribes to which the Aborigines belonged, nor did he describe the details of the singing and the dance. Sun Moon Lake is in the inland county of Nantou, located in central Taiwan. According to the Sun Moon Lake National Scenic Area Administration, the Thao tribe inhabits this area, and is “the smallest of Taiwan’s indigenous groups, with just over five hundred members.”<sup>63</sup> It is possible, however, that the Taiwanese government managed to have the nearby Thao tribe or other indigenous peoples perform for the composer.

In May 1972, Ma again visited Taiwan. Unfortunately there is not much information about this trip. He only mentioned that he performed in Taichung, a big city that is located in

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<sup>62</sup> Sicong Ma, *居高聲自遠* [Sicong Ma’s Collections: Articles, Letters, and Diary] (Tienjin, China: Bai Hua Publishing, 1999), 185.

<sup>63</sup> Sun Moon Lake Reflections, “Thao Traditions,” *Sun Moon Lake National Scenic Area Association*, <http://www.sunmoonlake.gov.tw/EN/02000468.aspx> (accessed September 16, 2012).

central Taiwan.<sup>64</sup> After returning to the United States, Ma started to compose the *Amei* and *Gaoshan* suites, and finished both in 1973.<sup>65</sup> It is clear that Ma had seen or heard the performance of the Amis, based on the title of *Amei Suite*. This chapter seeks to determine the original sources or elements of both suites.

### *Amei Suite*

*Amei Suite* consists of five movements: 1) Spring 春天; 2) Solitude 寂寞; 3) Mountain Song 山歌; 4) Moon 月亮; and 5) Dance of the Hilly Area 山地舞. Ma provided the Chinese title for each movement, but there is no indication that he supplied the English translations. Ma wrote a brief program note for this suite, "... Each movement has a title that describes the music. 'Mountain Song' is the only movement that adopts a complete aboriginal song. There are merely minor changes. Speaking of the other movements, I hope they maintain the Amei musical style."<sup>66</sup>

Ma seems to have selected his movement titles from non-Aboriginal sources, as no similar titles have been found among Aboriginal songs. For example, the Chinese title of the third movement, 'Mountain Song 山歌' mainly appears in the music of another Taiwanese group, the Hakka. The Hakka people are Han Chinese that immigrated to Taiwan about four hundred years ago. They lived in the hilly areas of the country and made a living by farming tea. "Mountain Song" is the song that Hakka people sang while working in the hills.<sup>67</sup> The title of the

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<sup>64</sup> Ma, 188.

<sup>65</sup> Jingwei Zhang, 馬思聰年譜 1912-1987 [Sicong Ma: Chronology 1912-1987] (Beijing, China: China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Publishing Co., 2004), 223.

<sup>67</sup> Hakka Music Net, "Hakka Music," Hakka Affairs Council, <http://music.ihakka.net/default.aspx> (accessed September 17, 2012).

fifth movement, “Dance of a Hilly Area 山地舞,” is a general term used by the Han Chinese to refer to the Aboriginal dance. In early days, the Han Chinese called the Taiwanese Aborigines “mountain-area people,” and called aboriginal song “mountain-area song.” The Aborigines never gave any of their songs this kind of title. Sicong Ma’s compositional style therefore shows non-Aboriginal influences as well. Whereas the composer employed a strictly monophonic treatment of folk resources in his compositions, the Amis were known to have a great amount of polyphonic music.

Investigating the origins of the *Amei Suite* was a difficult task. The only information available was Sicong Ma’s description of this suite and the postscript to *The Collection of Sicong Ma’s Violin Works*, written by the Chinese composer and educator Xua Su. Su noted “The third movement of the *Amei Suite* was written based on an Amis fishing song.”<sup>68</sup> I therefore invited some Aborigine friends to listen to the music.<sup>69</sup> None of them recognized the music, but they offered the first lead: the melody of “Mountain Song” appears in a song by an aboriginal singing group the Nanwan Sisters, “Soul Sisters.”<sup>70</sup> The Nanwan Sisters is a group of three female singers from the Puyuma tribe of Nanwan. Two are native Puyuma; the other is an Amis that married a Puyuma and resides in Nanwan. Since the locations of the Puyuma and the Amis are adjacent, it is reasonable to assume that they exchanged cultural influences. “Soul Sisters” is a folksong written by a Puyuma singer and songwriter, Purdur, whose musical style is

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<sup>68</sup> Su Xia, Postscript to 馬思聰小提琴曲集 [Collection of Sicong Ma’s Violin Works] (Beijing China: People’s Music Publishing House, 1995).

<sup>69</sup> The author worked with these Aboriginal singers in an Aboriginal musical production 很久沒有敬我了你 in Hong Kong. Most of them are from Puyuma tribe and Amis tribe, and their age is between fifteen and forty-five.

<sup>70</sup> Purdur, “Soul Sisters,” Nanwan Sisters, TCM CD, 2008.

a fusion of Taiwanese pop music and aboriginal music. He also frequently uses the languages of Mandarin and Puyuma in his songs, such as in “Soul Sisters.” The first section of the song is a melody with Chinese text. The second section, the chorus, is the melody that appears in Ma’s “Mountain Song” and is sung with non-lexical syllables. Taiwanese Aborigines among the Puyuma and Amis tribes commonly use non-lexical syllables in their singing, such as “hai na lu a na i a na ya on hoi...” and “in hai on...”<sup>71</sup> In “Soul Sisters,” the Nanwan Sisters sing non-lexical syllables in the entire chorus section, rendering it impossible to know if the text has any meaning (see example 3.1).



Example 3.1. NLS in Nanwan Sisters “Soul Sisters.”

Loh's dissertation contains the second source of "Mountain Song." Like Xia Su, Loh contends that it was written based on an Amis fishing song *Mifoting*, sung by the Amis tribe in Malan.<sup>72</sup> It is set in a verse form in which "two stanzas use identical texts except in regard to the persons named and their ways of fishing" (see table 3.1).<sup>73</sup>

Like many Amis songs, *Mifoting* has appoggiaturas throughout. In songs such as this, the appoggiatura serves to prepare the voice for the next note, making it easier to sing, and thus more idiomatic for the voice. In “Mountain Song” Ma omitted all the appoggiaturas, rendering it more appropriate for instrumental performances (see example 3.2 and 3.3).

<sup>71</sup> Loh, 202-204.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 475.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 208.

Table 3.1. Text and translation of *Mifoting*<sup>74</sup>

<i>Mifoting</i>	Fishing Song
Original text:  (Stanza 1) mimanai mimanai chi <u>wama</u> no mita mi <u>tafuku dai</u> kawari no paanifung chi <u>wama</u> no mita pinaai ko foting ni <u>wama</u> tsutsai yae awaai ko wikor no foting ni <u>wama</u>  (Stanza 2) mimanai mimanai chi <u>kaka</u> no mita mi <u>pachingkoai</u> kawari no pannifung chi <u>kaka</u> no mita na pinaai ko foting ni <u>kaka</u> tsutsai yae awaai ko wikor no foting ni <u>kaka</u>	English Translation:  (Stanza 1) What, what is our <u>father</u> doing? Our <u>father</u> went to the east of Paanifung to <u>cast</u> <u>the net</u> . How many fish has <u>father</u> caught? <u>Father</u> has caught a fish but without its tail.  (Stanza 2) What, what is our <u>brother</u> doing? Our <u>brother</u> went to the east of Paanifung to <u>shoot the fish</u> . How many fish has <u>brother</u> shot? <u>Brother</u> has shot a fish but without its tail.



Example 3.2. *Mifoting*, with appoggiaturas.



Example 3.3. Sicong Ma, *Amei Suite*, “Mountain Song.” Note omission of the appoggiaturas.

<sup>74</sup> Loh, 208-209.

Taiwanese musicologist Yuxiu Lu spent five years collecting and preserving traditional tunes of the Amis tribe in Malan, finishing the recording production in 2011. The collection includes the tune of “Mountain Song.” In Lu’s version, just as in Loh’s, the tune belongs to a fishing song that is labeled as a song sung in the field. Unlike Loh’s version, though, it comprises three stanzas, with a text that differs slightly from *Mifoting* (see table 3.2).<sup>75</sup> One can therefore conclude that the Aborigines do not always sing the same lyrics for a song, as the use of improvisation is common among the tribes.

Table 3.2. Yuxiu Lu, original text and translation of “Mountain Song.”

	Fishing Song
Original text:	English Translation:
(Stanza 1) mimanay mimanay kiso hani kaka micekiw way i tina satefed ci kaka no maku  hakuwaay ku cekiw iso hani tuloay i ku safaw no tatokod ni Ar’sis no maku tuloay i ku safaw no tatokod ni Ar’sis no maku	(Stanza 1) My brother what are you doing? My brother is picking sea shells in the north of Little Yeh Liou of Taitung How many sea shells did you collect? My Ar’sis has collected 13 big sea shells My Ar’sis has collected 13 big sea shells
(Stanza 2) mimanay mimanay si kaka no maku mitafukuday i tilaay i cepo si kaka no maku hakuwaay ku futing isu kaka faloay i ku safaw no si ngusuay ni kaka no maku	(Stanza 2) My brother, what are you doing? My brother is netting fish at the sea How much fish did you catch, brother? My brother he has caught 18 <i>si ngusuay</i> fish
(Stanza 3) mimanay mimanay kiso hani kaka mi iceremay to sulita i kawali no pacifalang si kaka hakuwaay ku sulita isu hani limaay i ku safaw no sulita ni kaka no maku	(Stanza 3) My brother what are you doing? My brother is diving for octopuses in the east of Fugon Harbor How many octopuses did you shoot? My brother has shot 15 octopuses

<sup>75</sup> Chuyin Culture and Art Group, *A Rolling Age: Farmer’s Songs in Malan* (Taitung Taiwan: Chuyin Culture and Art Group, 2009), 61-62.



Dr. Chun-Yen Sun, an important commentator, reveals that the Han Chinese influenced the Amis more than they influenced any other tribe. From 1949, when Chiang Kai-Shek, the first president of Taiwan, governed Taiwan, patriotic songs were widely played. The texts of those patriotic songs concern the retaking of the Chinese Mainland from the Communist Party. *Taiwan Hao* (台灣好) was one of the most popular patriotic songs during that period. Written by Jia-Lun Luo, *Taiwan Hao* was published in the 1950's.<sup>76</sup> Luo is Chinese and never had any connection with the Taiwanese Aborigines. *Taiwan Hao* is in Bel Canto style, accompanied by a symphony orchestra. Some female singers such as Zi Wei (紫微), He-Ting Yan (閻荷婷), Ming-Li Zhang (張明麗), and Qi Zhang (張琪) recorded the song in the 1960's and 1970's, making it widely available to the Taiwanese people. Since Loh's ethnomusicological research did not begin until 1967, it is possible that the Amis people heard *Taiwan Hao* and arranged the melody with traditional Amis texts. As can be seen in Example 3.4, the first half part of *Taiwan Hao* is very similar to *Mifoting*, while its second part differs greatly. It is possible, therefore, that the talented Amis modified a patriotic Chinese song, and made scholars and musicians like Loh and Ma believe that *Mifoting* was an original Amis song.

However, the first Taiwanese Aboriginal pop singer, the Amis Jing-Zi Lu a.k.a. Ci Ku, has a different opinion. Lu was celebrated in Asia and released a great number of recordings during 1960's. She claimed that once she was humming the tune of *Mifoting* in the recording studio, and the music producer asked her to record the song. Later it became popular and a Chinese text was added.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Yuyuan Huang, 台灣阿歌歌 [The Early Taiwanese Songs] (Taipei, Taiwan: Xiang Yang Cultural Press, 2005), 223-224.

<sup>77</sup> Yung-Sheng Chen (nephew of Ci Ku), e-mail message to author, October 13, 2012.



Example 3.4. *Taiwan Hao*.

Unfortunately, information on the other four movements was not as forthcoming as it was on the first. One has no idea how much Ma studied the music of the Taiwanese Aborigines before he started working on *Amei Suite*, but one can determine ways in which these movements share the essential characteristics of Amis music: 1) use of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale; 2) ending on *la* or *do* mostly; 3) occasional modulation; 4) a range that often exceeds an octave. Since Ma would most likely employ these traditional elements in the solo violin part, I searched for evidence there.

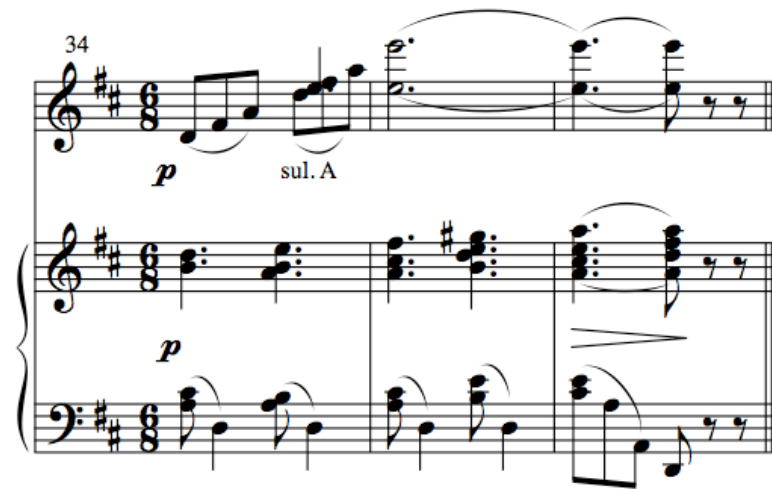
“Spring,” “Moon,” and “Dance of the Hilly Area” use the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, with “Solitude” providing the exception. In the  $f^{\#}$ -minor “Solitude,” *si* ( $G^{\#}$ ) appears three times in the first melodic phrase. In Lu’s study, *fa* and *si* are rarely used; the use of *si* in “Solitude” therefore is not typical of Amis music (see example 3.5).



Example 3.5. *Si* appears three times at the beginning of “Solitude.”

“Spring,” which is in D major, is the only movement that does not end on *la*. The violin line ends on *re* (E), which is very uncommon in the Amis music. In the course of my research, I

have not heard or read of any Amis music that ends on *re*. The piano part of “Spring,” however, ends on a tonic, D-major triad. The *re* in the violin part therefore functions as the ninth of D major (see example 3.6).



Example 3.6. “Spring” ends on *re*, which rarely happens in Amis songs.

The rest of the Amis musical characteristics—occasional modulation and the register over an octave—are general conditions that all of the movements conform to them. *Amei Suite* fits the Amis musical tradition in substance, but the exceptional “Solitude” can be taken as the composer’s experiment of innovation.

### ***Gaoshan Suite***

The title of *Gaoshan Suite* evokes a general sense of the music of Taiwanese Aborigines. This lack of specificity, however, makes research on the aboriginal sources of this suite much more difficult. I, by chance, found a clue in Qian Liu’s study, *Polyphonic Music of the Ethnic Minorities in Taiwan and the Fujian Area*. The fifth movement of the *Gaoshan Suite*, “Calling Back Spirits,” is similar to an Amis song 老蕃祝割粟之歌 (Old Man Song, for Millet

Harvest).<sup>78</sup> According to Liu, its music first appeared in Kurosawa's book, where it had both English and Japanese titles. In Kurosawa's example, the text is written in the Japanese syllables, katakana, and is labeled as a working song (see example 3.7). In Liu's example, the text is written with English letters (see example 3.8). Both texts only present the pronunciation, and no translation or description is given. Sun pointed out that in 1925 Ichijō Shinzaburō (一條慎三郎)<sup>79</sup> first collected the music of *Old Man Song, for Millet Harvest* in the area today known as Le Ho Li, located in Yuli, Hualien.<sup>80</sup> In Shinzaburō's example, the song title is アミ族蕃謡歌 ㄞ.<sup>81</sup> Unfortunately, the recording of this song is missing, so one cannot know if the transcribed music accurately reflects the performance of the song. It seems unlikely that Sicong Ma knew the origin of "Calling Back Spirits," since the title he gave does not relate to the content of the traditional song at all. It is possible that the title reflects Ma's perceptions of the emotive qualities of the music, rather than his knowledge of the traditional song.

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<sup>78</sup> Qian Liu, 台閩少數民族的複音民歌 [Multipart Music of the Ethnic Minorities in Taiwan and the Fujian Area] (Taipei Taiwan: Chinese Folk-art Foundation, 1990), 150.

<sup>79</sup> Ichijō Shinzaburō 一條慎三郎 (1874-1945), composer and music teacher during Japan's domain in Taiwan. He organized student orchestras and choirs, and composed school anthems for several schools such as Taipei First Normal College, Chiayi High School, and Yilan Elementary. He also did field work and published books of music of the Taiwan Aborigines.

<sup>80</sup> Le Ho Li used to be named as Hong Zuo She (紅座社) during Japan's domination.

<sup>81</sup> Chun-Yen Sun, e-mail message to author, June 28, 2012.

[曲例・150] Old man song, for millet harvest  
 老蕎麦刈り祝いの歌  
 アミ・紅座社

[音頭]  
 Solo エ ヘ エ ホ エ ヨ オ ホ ア イ オ ホ オ ー オ ホ ハ ハ ー イ

[斉唱]  
 オ ホ イ ー エ ヘ エ ホ エ ヨ オ ホ ア ー イ  
 ハ ッ ヘ ー イ ハ ハ ッ ハ ー イ

イ ヤ ハ オ ホ ホ イ エ ヘ ヘ エ  
 オ ハ ヘ ハ ッ ハ ー イ エ ハ ハ ア

エ ヘ ー イ ウ オ ホ ホ ー イ ヘ ー イ  
 ハ ー イ ハ ッ ヘ ー イ

老蕎麦の美声なるもの音頭をなし独唱の部をうたう。

Example 3.7. Kurosawa's version of *Old Man Song, for Millet Harvest*.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Kurosawa, 269.

## 21. 老蕃祝割粟之歌(紅座社)

(獨唱)

e he e ho e yo o ho ai o ho o — o ho  
 ha ha — i o ho a a o ho i  
 he i he e ho e yo o ho ai ha ha tsu  
 ha — i i ya ha o ho ho hoi o ho he-i hatz ha — i  
 e he he he e e ha ha a ha — i etzu he — i  
 u o ho ho — i he — i  
 ha-tsu he — i

— 150 —

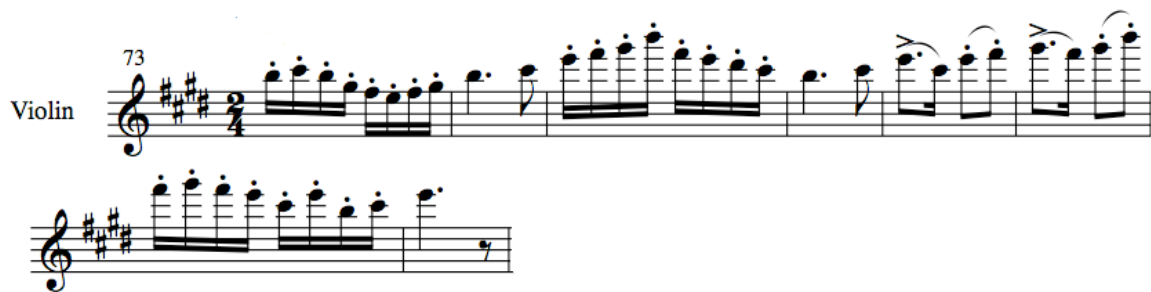
Example 3.8. Qian Liu's Version of *Old Man Song, for Millet Harvest*.

In addition to “Calling Back Spirits,” it appears that the second movement “Drinking,” the third movement “Reed,” and the fourth movement “Battle Dance” are written in the Amis musical style. Taking the model from the characteristics listed above, the movements employ the anhemitonic pentatonic scale and modulation. Ma also makes use of the 3/4 meter that appears in many Amis songs. Additionally, the artificial harmonics in “Reed” are apparently an imitation to the sound of the aboriginal flute (see example 3.9).



Example 3.9. The artificial harmonics in “Reed.”

Although the fifth movement “Dance of Good Year” is also written in the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, its musical language is closer to Chinese music. One can find a similar style in the second theme (mm. 51-241) of the famous violin concerto *Butterfly Lovers* by Zhanhao He and Gang Chen (see example 3.10).



Example 3.10a. *Butterfly Lovers* Violin Concerto, mm. 73-80.



Example 3.10b. In “Dance of Good Year,” the running passage is similar to the one in *Butterfly Lovers* Violin Concerto.

As for the first movement “Sacrifice,” Ma used a four-note scale of *fa sol la si* that never appears in any Gaoshan tribes. The only tribe that uses *fa* and *si* in a scale is the Paiwan, but the omissive *la* in the Paiwan’s scale does not fit Ma’s scale for “Sacrifice.” A closer model is suggested by the grace notes on A that appear throughout the movement (see example 3.10). These grace notes can be played as natural harmonics on the violin, and the aboriginal mouthbow

can also produce natural harmonics. Hence, it is possible that “Sacrifice” is an imitation of the sound of the mouthbow.



Example 3.11. The grace notes of A appear throughout “Sacrifice.”

## Publication

The publication of Sicong Ma’s violin works is various and disordered. Ma authorized some Taiwanese presses to publish his music during his residence in the United States, yet his music was again published in China after he died. Two separate accounts of the publication of Ma’s violin works in Taiwan and in China are therefore explained below.

### A. Publication in Taiwan

#### a. Cheng Chung Book Company 正中書局 (CCBC)

CCBC published *Amei Suite* for violin and piano in 1981.<sup>83</sup> It was released as a single-piece edition. According to the music collector John Tsai, some elder violin teachers may have collected *Gaoshan Suite* as well. But no evidence proves the single-piece edition of *Gaoshan Suite* has ever been published. In the same year, CCBC published *Sicong Ma’s Solo Violin Works, Book 2*. It does not contain *Amei Suite* or *Gaoshan Suite*.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Sicong Ma, *Amei Suite* (Taipei Taiwan: Cheng Chung Book Company, 1981).

<sup>84</sup> John Tsai, e-mail message to author, September 16, 2012. Book 1 was published by another company, Yue Yun Press.



b. Yue Yun Press 樂韻出版社 (YYP)

YYP published *Sicong Ma's Solo Violin Works, Book 1* in 1976.<sup>85</sup> This edition only contains four pieces and does not include *Amei Suite* and *Gaoshan Suite*.

B. Publication in China

a. Wan Ye Book Company 萬葉書店 (WYBC)

WYBC was the predecessor of People's Music Publishing House. It published several of Ma's single movement works, such as *Epic* 史詩 (1953) and *Dance of the Autumn Harvest* 秋收舞曲 (1953). Some used music is still available on the largest retail website in China, Taobao.com (淘寶網).

b. Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing Group 上海文藝出版社

This company published *Sicong Ma Violin Works* in 1963. Content information is not available.

c. People's Music Publishing House 人民音樂出版社 (PMPH)

In 1995 PMPH published Ma's most complete violin works. *Amei Suite* and *Gaoshan Suite* are collected in this edition. But, this company has not re-published any of Ma's music since its first publishing in 1995. Lidong Li, director of International Cooperation and Copyrights Center of PMPH, notes that the copyright of Sicong Ma's violin works is no longer held by PMPH.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Sicong Ma, *Solo Violin Works Book 1* (Taipei Taiwan: Yue Yun Press, 1976).

<sup>86</sup> Lidong Li, e-mail message to author, September 17, 2012.

d. Central Conservatory of Music Press 中央音樂學院出版社

The Central Conservatory of Music published *Sicong Ma Collection* in 2007. The collection has seven volumes that include Ma's musical works, pictures, articles, and diary. *Amei Suite* and *Gaoshan Suite* are collected in the fifth volume: Solo Violin and Chamber Music Works.<sup>87</sup>

In his letter to Xia Su, Ma referred to the publication of *Gaoshan Suite*, "...I would like to first publish the Double Violin Concerto (including the orchestra version and the piano deduction) and *Gaoshan Suite* for string orchestra..."<sup>88</sup> With Xia Su's help, he planned to publish the string orchestra version of *Gaoshan Suite*. However, this plan was not completed until 2007, *Gaoshan Suite* for string quintet appeared in Central Conservatory of Music Press's edition.<sup>89</sup>

Today, *Sicong Ma's Solo Violin Works Book 1* (1976) is still available in Taiwan. As for *Amei Suite* and *Gaoshan Suite*, one can only find them in *Sicong Ma Collection* (2007). Nevertheless, this collection is priced 1,800 Chinese Yuan Renminbi (\$287), which makes it prohibitively expensive for most students.

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<sup>87</sup> Sicong Ma, 小提琴獨奏、器樂重奏 [Solo Violin and Chamber Music Works], vol. 5 of 馬思聰全集 [Sicong Ma Collections]. Edited by Ma Sicong Research Group, (China: Beijing Central Conservatory of Music Press, 2007), 177-203.

<sup>88</sup> Ma, 158.

<sup>89</sup> Ma, 393-412.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO *AMEI SUITE* AND *GAOSHAN SUITE*

*Amei Suite* was first published in Taiwan in 1981, when Sicong Ma was still alive. I have every reason to believe that he proofread the music before it was published. Collected by Sidney Cox Library of Music & Dance, Cornell University, a sheet music of *Amei Suite* published by Cheng Chung Book Company proves that Sicong Ma had owned it, and had given it to someone as a gift. On the first page of the score, Ma wrote, “For Yi-Heng, from your uncle. November 11 in Philadelphia.”<sup>90</sup>

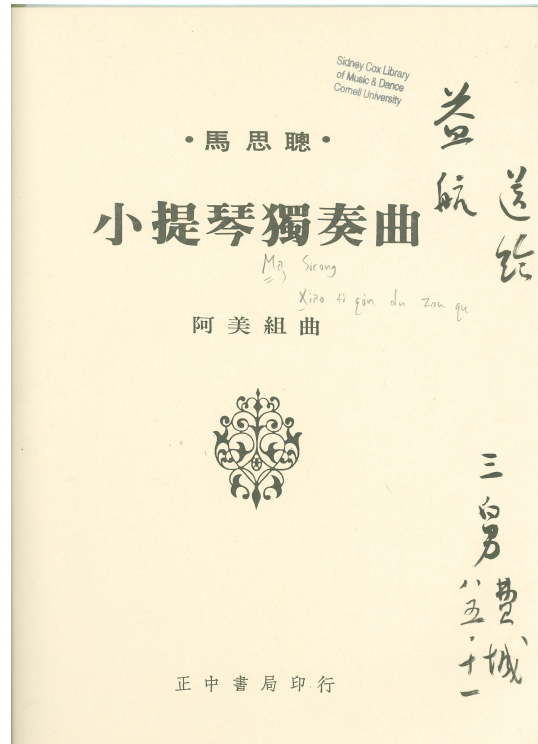


Figure 4.1. Sicong Ma's handwriting on the first page of *Amei Suite*, a collection from Sidney Cox Library of Music & Dance, Cornell University

However, due to the rudimentary practice of printing musical scores at that time, the music is riddled with errors. In 1995, eight years after Ma's death, the Chinese publisher

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<sup>90</sup> Dr. Kuang Yu, the husband of Sicong Ma's niece Zhenmei Wang, proved that it is Sicong Ma's handwriting. However, he has no idea who the receiver is.

People's Music Publishing House published both *Amei Suite* and *Gaoshan Suite*. Like the 1981 edition, both pieces from 1995 contain a number of mistakes. In this chapter, all the music examples will be given based on the 1995 edition.

### *Amei Suite*

Although the sheet music of *Amei Suite* includes parts for both piano and violin, I suggest that the violinist read the piano part rather than his or her own part, since the piano music contains far fewer errors.

The tonal relationship among movements of *Amei Suite* is interesting. The keys of the first four movements are D major, f<sup>#</sup> minor, a minor, and e minor. D, F<sup>#</sup>, A, and E are also the first four notes of the first movement “Spring.” The final movement is in b minor, which is the relative minor of “Spring” (D major).

#### I. Spring 春天 (Moderato)

The first four notes (D-F<sup>#</sup>-A-E) make up the main motive of the movement, and also foreshadow the progress of the modulation. The movement starts in D major (asserted by the motive's first three notes—D-F<sup>#</sup>-A), and then ends in E major, which is the last note of the motive, in m. 14. In the beginning, the violin and the piano play the first three notes in unison. The performer should be sure the length of each note is played uniformly in both parts. The violin part is supposed to have a slur over all three notes. While the violin keeps the *mezzo-forte* dynamic, the piano decrescendo diminishes the volume to *piano*. The *pizz.* on the first beat in m. 1 and m. 2 has to emphasize the dissonant G<sup>#</sup> and the highest E (see example 4.1).



Example 4.1. “Spring” mm. 1-2. The *pizz.* of the violin part has to emphasize the dissonant G<sup>#</sup> and the highest E.

A hemiola occurs in m. 3, m. 8, m.17, m. 22, and m. 31. It divides the measure into three quarter notes, and is followed by an interesting cadence: V<sup>7</sup>/V – V<sup>7#</sup> – I. To emphasize these points of rhythmic accentuation, the proper choice of the bowings is essential. Making a slur on each two sixteenth notes is suggested. One can slightly add accents while the piano plays the quarter notes (see example 4.2).



Example 4.2. “Spring” mm. 3-4. The hemiola of 3/4 meter.

The use of harmonics is common in the suite. In mm. 15-19, the violin plays the theme in harmonics. In addition to the natural harmonics, there are also artificial harmonics of a perfect fifth. Smooth string crossing and flexible movement of the left hand are required (see example 4.3). Meanwhile, the piano has to play *pianissimo* to avoid covering the violin sound.

In mm. 29-30, there is no dot marked on the sixteenth notes in the PMPH edition, while the CCBC edition has the dots. I would suggest the violinist to play the one with no dots to make the opening string of E speak out (see example 4.4).



Example 4.3. “Spring” mm. 15-18. The natural harmonics.



Example 4.4a. CCBC version of “Spring” mm. 29-30. The dots on sixteenth notes.



Example 4.4b. PMPH version of “Spring” mm. 29-30. Only slurs on sixteenth notes.

## II. Solitude 寂寞 (Andante)

The piano part contains the main thematic material of this movement, as seen by the rising C-sharp melody played in octaves and in imitation in measures 1 and 2. One must be sure, though, not to ignore the counter melodies that occur between the two instruments (see example 4.5).



Example 4.5. “Solitude” mm. 1-4. The counter melodies.

Even though the dynamic is *piano* at the beginning, an expressive playing with stronger dynamic such as *mezzo-piano* or even *mezzo-forte* is acceptable since the melody reappears an octave higher from m. 16 in *pianissimo*.

### III. Mountain Song 山歌 (Allegretto)

The piano's repetition of I-ii of F major against the violin's melody in a minor enlivens this movement (mm. 1-15). In mm. 9-10, the B-flat major chord and the repeated A imitate the echoes heard in the mountains (see example 4.6).



Example 4.6. "Mountain Song" mm. 9-11. The echoes of A with B<sup>b</sup> major third

Ma again shows his affinity for harmonics in this movement, and still prefers natural harmonics rather than artificial ones. In m. 31 to the end, the violinist has to take care of frequent string crossing in order to produce natural harmonics. Playing with legato is important in this section (see example 4.7).



Example 4.7. "Mountain Song" mm. 30-33. The Harmonics.

#### IV. Moon 月亮 (Andantino)

Ma visited Sun Moon Lake and listened to the aboriginal music in 1968. Sun Moon Lake is widely regarded as one of the most stunning natural sights in Taiwan, and one assumes that the piano part of this movement evokes an image of the moon's reflection on the lake. There is no dynamic marking in the score. I would suggest playing *piano* for the right hand to imitate the waves of the water, but bringing out the melody of the left hand (see example 4.8).



Example 4.8. “Moon” mm. 1-2. Imitation of the waves of the water.

The only chance for the piano to sing a beautiful melody is the left hand part in mm. 8-10 (see example 4.9). The use of modal modulation is common in this suite. The melody starts in E major but ends in e minor (it switches between G<sup>#</sup> and G).





Example 4.9. “Moon” mm. 8-9. The melody of the left hand of the piano part has to be played

According to my sense of Chinese music, the main melody of this movement reminds me of Chinese fiddle Erhu<sup>91</sup> though I believe Ma did not intend to do so. I do not agree with imitating the sound of the Erhu fiddle since the suite has nothing to do with Chinese music, but it does enrich the beauty of the melody. One can evoke the character of the Erhu fiddle by using a single finger to perform a *portamento*. Do not avoid the sliding sound while shifting (see example 4.10).



## V. Dance of Hilly Area 山地舞 (Allegro)

This movement is in 3/8 meter. It was not written in a typical meter of the Amis dance, because the Amis dance is usually in a two-step or four-step pattern.<sup>92</sup> But the powerful rhythm and the anhemitonic pentatonic melody that ends on *la* are two characteristics of the Amis dance music. The pianist should add accents on each sixteenth note to ensure rhythmic accuracy at the beginning (see example 4.11).



Example 4.11. “Dance of Hilly Area” mm. 1-4. Accents on each downbeat helps ensure the rhythm.

The violin enters in the fifth measure with a line marked *appassionato*. Whenever the triplet comes, play it with confidence. Even playing the triplet unevenly or changing the rhythm into two thirty-seconds followed by a sixteenth is acceptable (see example 4.12).



Example 4.12. “Dance of Hilly Area” mm. 4-9. The triplets can be played unevenly.

Ma plays some rhythmic tricks in this movement. Note the groups of [4+4] and [5+5] that occur in mm. 8-12 and mm. 16-20 in the piano part. It might confuse the violinist if he/she does

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<sup>92</sup> Chi-Fang Chou, “The Amis Dance,” National Taiwan Arts Education Center. <http://web.arte.gov.tw/aborigine/index.htm> (accessed October 6, 2012).

not keep a steady tempo in mind (see example 4.13). The [5+5] group also appears in mm. 49-51 and mm. 57-59.



Example 4.13. “Dance of Hilly Area” mm. 8-12. Notes group of [4+4] and [5+5].

There are many non-chord tones that appear with strong dynamics to highlight the musical tension, such as in mm. 21-27, mm. 32-35, mm. 60-65, and mm. 70-73. I suggest that the pianist play those non-chord notes exactly with Ma’s dynamic indication (see example 4.14).



Example 4.14. “Dance of Hilly Area” mm. 22-25. Following the crescendo and decrescendo indication exactly.

In m. 47, the highest note F<sup>#</sup> might be a misprint, because in the Cheng-Chung Book Company’s version, it is D instead. Moreover, the note D is the more likely choice since from m. 44 the opening theme re-appears an octave higher. There is no reason to change just one note in

the theme. Keeping the F<sup>#</sup>, however, is beneficial for reaching a musical climax. I therefore suggest the violinist make the decision according to his/her own taste (see example 4.15).



Example 4.15a. PMPH version of “Dance of Hilly Area” mm. 45-48.



Example 4.15b. CCBC version of “Dance of Hilly Area” mm. 45-48.

### *Gaoshan Suite*

Compared to *Amei Suite*, the movements of *Gaoshan Suite* are related according to the principle of tempo and modal contrast. As seen in Table 4.1, the six movements of the suite alternate between slow and fast tempos. Additionally, each pair of movements creates a major-minor relationship.

Table 4.1. The tempo and key relations of *Gaoshan Suite*

<i>Gaoshan Suite</i>	Tempo	Key	Relation
Sacrifices	slow	a (ends in c <sup>#</sup> minor)	minor + major
Drinking	fast	D+A	
Reed	slow	D (ends on the dominant)	major + minor
Battle Dance	fast	a	
Calling Back Spirits	slow	d	minor + major
Dance of Good Year	fast	A	

## I. Sacrifices 祭祀 (Andante)

The grace note of A serves as a driving force throughout the movement. Ritual sacrifice is an important event for the Aborigines since they hold various sacrifices for different purposes, such as for harvesting, hunting, fishing, and seeding.<sup>93</sup> Though Ma does not indicate this in the score, I suggest that the violinist should play the grace notes as harmonics on the A string. The tone color of harmonics can be seen to represent the Aborigines' reverence towards their ancestors and the spirits of the land (see example 4.16).



Example 4.16. “Sacrifice” mm. 2-5. The grace note of A are suggested to play as harmonics.

The ties found throughout the movement create syncopations that suggest the conversation between the Aborigines and the spirits of their respected ancestors. In addition, intervals of a perfect or augmented fourth help depict the conversation between the earthly and the spirit realms. To evoke the serious, pious attitude appropriate to the sacrifice, performers are asked not to play too *espressivo*.

## II. Drinking 飲酒 (Allegro giocoso)

Because the Aborigines often plant millet to make wine, drinking becomes a standard part of their life. The repeated perfect fifths of D and A of the piano part in mm. 1-2 show the Aborigines' jovial personality while drinking. To complete this image, it is suggested that the

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<sup>93</sup> Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples Portal, “祭典儀式 (Sacrifices),” Council of Indigenous People Executive Yuan. <http://www.tipp.org.tw/formosan/population/population.aspx?codeid=-1&type=4> (accessed October 10, 2012)

perfect fifths of the left hand be played with accents. Additionally, the syncopations with the downward motive (A-F<sup>#</sup>-E-D) evoke the rhythmic activity seen in many traditional songs (see example 4.17).

Example 4.17. “Drinking” mm. 1-6. The motive [A-F<sup>#</sup>-E-D].

The change of meters in measure 7 represents the drunken men dancing with unsteady steps. While the time signature of both parts remains 3/4, the beats of the violin line are grouped in duple patterns, as seen in Example 4.18. This rhythmic grouping of two eighths and a quarter note commonly appears in many aboriginal songs with the text such as “in hai on,” which are non-lexical syllables.

There might be misprinted notes in m. 24. The G’s are natural in the violin part while they are G<sup>#</sup> in the piano part. In m. 8 there are also notes of G<sup>#</sup> in the violin part (see example 4.18 and example 4.19).



Example 4.18. “Drinking” mm. 7-10. Alternation of two- and three-beat groups. The last two beats are a common rhythm in aboriginal songs.



Example 4.19. “Drinking” mm. 24-25. Possible misprinted G’s.

From m. 18 the opening theme appears an octave higher, and from m. 35 the same melody again raises an octave. Playing with *poco accelerando* from m. 39 until the end is a good way to highlight the tension and highlight rising theme (see example 4.20).



Example 4.20. “Drinking” mm. 39-45. Playing with *poco accelerando* encouraged.

### III. Reed 蘆荻 (Allegretto)

In this movement, the Lydian mode on D is used, but the leading tone is omitted. The perfect fourths/fifths make the first eight measures lack harmonic direction. The major third appears in m. 9, seemingly to establish D major. However, the repeated dominant (A) of the piano part increases the uncertainty of the key (see example 4.21).



Example 4.21. “Reed” mm. 1-8. Repeated A increase the uncertainty of D major.

The entire movement is written with harmonics for the violin. Though the tempo is marked Allegretto, a slower version of Allegretto might help make the harmonics project beautifully. It requires the flexibility and the relaxation both on the left-hand shifting and the bow arm. Moreover, the pianist has to be sensitive enough to balance the dynamic between both players.

### IV. Battle Dance 戰舞 (Allegro)

The tonality of “Battle Dance” is a combination of a minor and A major. Though the key signature of this movement is a minor, there are several accidentals of C<sup>#</sup>, F<sup>#</sup>, and G<sup>#</sup> in mm. 12-19 and mm. 30-37. The appearance of B<sup>b</sup> even suggests the Phrygian mode on A. Sometimes a minor and A major exist simultaneously, producing dissonant notes. For instance, the clash



happens while VI<sup>7</sup> of A major and i of a minor appear together with *fortissimo* in mm. 20-21 (see example 4.22).



Example 4.22. “Battle Dance” mm. 20-21. VI/A and i/a appear at the same time.

Two rhythmic motives run throughout the movement: the syncopations in the piano and [two sixteenths + an eighth] in the violin. The driving rhythm of this movement evokes the Aboriginal battle dance, an important sacrifice performed by the warriors before they go head hunting.

#### V. Calling Back Spirits 招魂 (Lento)

The melody of the violin part starts with three notes: F-E-D. Ma employed the minor second between the F and E as the movement’s main motive. At the beginning of the piano part, the motive is supported by its minor sixth. Double stops appear frequently throughout the movement and become the basis of the violin part (see example 4.23).

From m. 19 to the end, Ma employs compound meter in the left hand of the piano part, as it is full of triplets. The violinist is thus easily confused since his/her part is in simple meter. It is essential for the pianist to keep a flowing tempo while playing these triplets, so that the violinist will not feel impeded while playing the lyrical melody (see example 4.24).



Violin

Piano

Example 4.24. “Calling Back Spirits” mm. 17-21. Compound meter is employed in the left hand of the piano part.

Example 4.25. “Calling Back Spirits” mm. 38-40. The double stop of A and E is suggested to play with natural harmonics.

## VI. Dance of the Good Year 豐年舞 (Allegro giocoso)

There are two motives in this movement. The first is a dotted rhythm that appears in mm. 2-5. The other is a downward anhemitonic pentatonic scale that appears in mm. 22-23 (see example 4.26).



Example 4.26a. “Dance of the Good Year” first motive: dotted rhythm. Example 4.26b. “Dance of the Good Year” second motive: downward anhemitonic pentatonic scale.

The scale that Ma used in this movement is in the Lydian mode on A. The fourth scale degree, D<sup>#</sup>, only appears in the piano part. A modulation in m. 31 to the dominant, E major, is followed by a return to the Lydian mode in m. 46. In mm. 66-68, the meter is divided as ♩ .+ ♩ . in the violin part, while the piano part has syncopations. Both players have to pay attention to these measures (see example 4.27).



Example 4.27. “Dance of the Good Year” mm. 66-68. The meter is divided as ♩ .+ ♩ . in the violin part with the syncopations in the piano part.

As for the double stops with harmonics in the last five measures, the violinist may consider making some adjustments. Especially in the last measure, the double stop of a perfect fifth might not project well. Keeping the B but omitting the lower E will produce a bigger and clearer sound than playing the double stop as written (see example 4.28).



Example 4.28. “Dance of the Good Year” mm. 73-77. The lower notes of the double stops of harmonics should perhaps be omitted.

## CONCLUSION

My study of Sicong Ma's *Amei Suite* and *Gaoshan Suite* has established the context of the composition, yielded analysis that will be useful to performers. However, some questions about the suits still remain unanswered. The movement "Spring" from *Amei Suite* and the movement "Calling Back Spirits" from *Gaoshan Suite* are the only two movements in which I have found their origins, but the aboriginal characteristics of other movements seem harder to find. In addition to the analysis of both suites, the organization of the publication of Sicong Ma's violin works is my important achievement as well. Today the only way to get the sheet music of *Amei Suite* and *Gaoshan Suite* is purchasing *Sicong Ma Collection* 馬思聰全集 published by the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. One can also get Ma's partial violin works by purchasing *Sicong Ma's Solo Violin Works, Book 1* published by Yue Yun Press, Taiwan; however, this edition does not include *Amei Suite* and *Gaoshan Suite*. As for the recordings of Ma's works, violinist Hsiao-Mei Ku has recorded Ma's complete works for violin that was released by Naxos in 2007.<sup>94</sup> Violinist Wei Liu also recorded Ma's complete works for violin, but the discs are only available in Japan.<sup>95</sup> One can purchase it via Wei Liu's website *Liu Wei On Line* or amazon.com.jp.<sup>96</sup>

The study of the music of Taiwanese Aborigines will be a lifelong mission for me. Due to the fact that musicologists such as Tsang-Houei Hsu and Yu-Hsiu Lu have devoted themselves to the study of aboriginal music, people can get as much valuable information as they wish. I hope

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<sup>94</sup> Sicong Ma, *Music for violin and piano* by Hsiao-Mei Ku and Ning Lu, vol. 1 & 2 (Naxos, 2007).

<sup>95</sup> Sicong Ma, *Liu Wei Plays Ma Sicong's Works for Violin* by Liu Wei and Shin-Ichi Shino (Tokyo: Aurora Kurashikaru, 2004).

<sup>96</sup> Liu Wei, *Liu Wei On Line* by MXMusic, <http://www.liuweimusic.com/discography.html> (accessed November 11, 2012).

there will be enthusiastic scholars who can translate Hsu's and Liu's books in different languages, so that people who do not understand Chinese can also study the music of the Taiwanese Aborigines in the future. Being a performer and a teacher, I wish to concentrate on educating young aborigines. It will be my calling to help the aboriginal children learn their own songs and instruments, and help them to love and cherish their cultures.

A proper performance of a new work, especially one that adopts foreign/folk materials, requires enthusiasm and a thorough understanding of its source and culture. Bela Bartok said, "A nation creates music – the composer only arranges it." This idea reveals how precious folk music is to musicians. This document comprises just a preliminary introduction to both the composer Sicong Ma and the music of the Taiwanese Aborigines. The goal of this document is to promote the culture of my home country. I hope that performers will benefit from this work, and will have a better concept of Taiwanese Aboriginal music. Moreover, I hope that this project will inspire more musicians to compose and perform works that draw on the folkloric and indigenous idioms of their own countries.

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## APPENDIX. LETTER OF PERMISSION

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November 7th, 2012

Ms. Ming-Ying Chiu

2000 Brightside Dr. Apt. 2212

Baton Rouge, LA 70820

Dear Ms. Ming-Ying Chiu,

This letter is to confirm that you do have the permission to include our publication as musical example in your dissertation.(publish your dissertation with musical examples) It refers the works by Mr. Sicong Ma, *Amei Suite* (阿美组曲) and *Gaoshan Suite* (高山组曲).

Thanks very much for your interest in Mr. Ma's works! We will look forward to reading your dissertation.

Sincerely,

Prof. Yu Renhao 俞人豪 

Central Conservatory of Music Press General Editor & Vice-director

## VITA

Ming-Ying Chiu, a native of Taoyuan, Taiwan, began her violin studies at the age of ten. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree at Soochow University, and a Master of Arts degree in Tunghai University. During her study in Tunghai University, she studied orchestra conducting with Dr. Annie Chung, and conducted Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*. During 2004-2008, Chiu held a string of teaching positions at Yamaha Music Institute, Kuan-Fu Elementary School, Tungmen Elementary School, Moonstring Youth Orchestra, Jen-Ai Elementary School, Classic Youth Orchestra, Hsi-Hsing Elementary School, Kornell Elementary School, and Cavalleria de Musica Orchestra in Taiwan.

Chiu is pursuing the degree of Doctoral of Musical Arts in violin performance with a minor in music theory at Louisiana State University.